

SUMMER ROVING.

The season for summer roving is now nearly over. The wanderers have returned, or about to return. I would invite the more serious and reflecting of these to a few minutes' consideration of some questions relative to this practice. Is it not well worthy of one hour's consideration to endeavor to determine what have been the fruits of this summer's recreation, and what is the influence of this summer roving, and of fashionable summer resorts especially. The tendency to leave the city during the summer months is increasing. Young and old, sick and well, fashionable and those making higher professions, all hasten from the city, as from a prison, at the first breath of summer air. For a long time, pure air and quiet were the only requisites easily obtained at a country farm-house; but now the passion or fashion is for the sea-shore and sea-bathing, every little spot by the ocean's shore, where hotel or boarding-house is to be had, is thronged, and its accommodations, no matter how inconvenient or disagreeable, received with seeming gratitude; while the larger places number their guests by hundreds and thousands, from the brightest, best and most gifted the country can produce. The gratefulness of this change is acknowledged; its necessity, in many cases, admitted willingly; the good influences arising from intimacy with nature, in the green fields or by the ocean's shore, heartily confessed.

To the drooping invalid, the care-worn student, the pining child, the worn-out frame of the watching mother, the too-closely confined teacher, the hard-working and self-sacrificing minister, each breeze comes fraught with renewal of vigor, life and hope. Let the kindly ministrations of nature never be undervalued; its soothing, healing, invigorating powers never be overlooked by those seeking to restore exhausted frames and forces. But when all have been included who need the change, or would be essentially benefited by it, how large a multitude remains of those who only leave their homes for amusement—for dissipation! Yes, for dissipation! for by what more appropriate term can you designate a mode of wasting time, in which evening dancing and chatting and singing and reading of frivolous stories, and morning slumbering, are prominent characteristics? What more appropriate name is there for precious time and talents given up to nights of revel, of heated crowds, of unmeaning prattle, of exciting card-playing, of giddy waltzing?

We presume not to question the necessity, the advantage of recreation; but we more than question, we deny, either necessity or advantage in dissipation. And whenever amusement or pleasure-seeking is the *main object*, then this practice of summer roving becomes dissipation; becomes pernicious; is clearly wrong. For if health, the best use of time, and spiritual improvement, are lost sight of for one day, be it winter or summer, call it work-time or play-time, that day is one we shall be glad to forget when the end of all days shall arrive. Strange that any soul can forget this!

That thousands do forget it all the year round, wasting their time and polluting their souls, is a

standing wonder to every thoughtful, every serious, every religious mind. And a most melancholy thing it is to see the first lessons in time-killing taken by the young at our fashionable watering-places! Many, with the bloom of innocence on their cheeks, willing or eager to learn the meaning of life and its uses, and who till now, with the beautiful instincts of the soul, have used their moments with some degree of wisdom and high purpose, there first imbibe the idea, perhaps, that enjoyment may be sought in the most frivolous of pursuits, in unwholesome late hours, in occupations which not only strengthen no faculty of the mind, no affection of the heart, no muscle or function of the body, but do actually weaken and injure all these. The inexperienced victims of fashion do not at once discover the cheat, and ache under the disappointment. They not only commit the immediate folly, but carry home the fatal error, the false view of recreation, the moral blindness as to abuse of time, which, it may be, will gradually undermine their future usefulness, and their wholesome growth into a fitness for Heaven.

We would have this mused upon seriously by a class rapidly increasing in this country—the giddy mature, the adult children—they who sport with the tremendous responsibility of example laid upon them—a burden which dignified virtue would carry lightly, and which they cannot shake off, sport and be thoughtless as they will.

We would have the young ponder it. If the occupations of the summer have not given them a distaste for idle hours and frivolous amusements, and a longing for something more dignified, profitable and noble, then God be merciful to them, when their spirits must plunge into the mysteries on which now they spend not a thought, when they shall learn whether they have fitted themselves for perpetual, joyous, glorious, advancing virtue and action, or must feed, forever, dumb, motionless and miserable, upon bitter recollections.

If religion and eternity be other than meaningless words, then the frivolity, the worldliness, the artificialness, the thoughtlessness of those gathered in the drawing-rooms of our summer palaces must deeply depress, almost to gloom, the heart that looks beyond time, upon the fruits thereof. The untruthfulness, the crushing of all the brighter, purer impulses at the shrine of fashion, the deadening of all the higher, purer aims of the spirit by the paralyzing power of the world's atmosphere, the stifling of the consciousness of a better purpose in life, till the being ends in being utterly perverted and false—false to itself, false to others, false to God. This is the result. This is an influence of a fashionable summer resort. Who would not weep to watch the heavenly gift of beauty perverted to all unhallowed uses—the bright eye flashing with scorn, pride or triumph, which *should* only beam with love and pity and sympathy? Whose heart would not grow heavy, to follow the gay, the courted, the caressed, the flattered, to their retirement, and know of the throbbing temples, weeping eyes, aching hearts, and not mourn over the hollowness of the world, and ask sadly and fearfully what will be the testimony of the recording

angels? Christians, so called, are among these scenes: do they realize their mission and their duty there? If every Christian was true to his Master *there*, an untold influence would be exerted, even as the good is greater and more powerful than the evil.

There is another matter of serious inquiry. What is the effect produced upon the dwellers by the sea-shore, and in the quiet country village, by the outpouring, from the city, of the gay, the fashionable, the worldly? What life does the fashionable world reveal to them? A life spent in seeking for pleasure, occupied with amusement! In contrast to their early hours, their daily toil, their simple fare, their simple dress and simple enjoyments, how must all the glare and glitter, tinsel and show of the world's people dazzle and bewilder their victim, and seem like the gorguous fabric of a dream! How can it help bringing questions of the inequalities of lots, loss of contentment and true enjoyment, and false estimates of life?

It surely would result in good, if thoughts and inquiries such as these should occupy the minds of many between this and another summer, so that evils now prevalent might be avoided, and better results follow from summer roving and summer resorts.